The Wayback Machine - http://web.archive.org/web/20201122140046/https://www.metrowestdail…

Can You Chip In?

They're trying to change history—don't let them. The Wayback Machine is a crucial resource in the fight against disinformation, and now more than ever we need your help. Right now we're preserving history as it unfolds, keeping track of who's saying what and when—all without charging for access, selling user data, or running ads. Instead, the Internet Archive (which runs this project) relies on the generosity of individuals to help us keep the record straight.

We don't ask often, but right now, we have a 2-to-1

The MetroWest Daily News

The Wayback Machine - http://web.archive.org/web/20201122140047/https://cdn.gatehousemedi…

Natick Stop & Shop owner says plan for Rtes. 9, 27 could force store out

By Charlie Breitrose/Daily News staff
Posted Aug 11, 2010 at 12:01 AM
Updated Aug 11, 2010 at 11:04 AM

A plan to reconfigure the intersection of routes 9 and 27 may please drivers - but it could also force out Stop & Shop, says the owner of the 9/27 Shopping Center.

A plan to reconfigure the intersection of routes 9 and 27 may please drivers - but it could also force out Stop & Shop, says the owner of the 9/27 Shopping Center.

Proposed changes to the tricky intersection were presented last night by BETA Group Inc., the firm hired by the town to design the new interchange.

The plan would reduce the number of cloverleaf interchanges from four to two, eliminating some of the most dangerous parts of the intersection, said Bill McGrath, senior project manager with BETA.

The changes would also mean the loss of as many as 70 parking spaces at the shopping center. That could prompt Stop & Shop and other retailers to leave.

Perhaps the most dangerous spot is on Rte. 9, where cars getting on westbound from Rte. 27 North have to cross over drivers getting off Rte. 9 onto Rte. 27, and vice versa.

Instead of having cars criss-crossing, the new configuration has cars exiting Rte. 9 before the cars coming from Rte. 27 enter the road, said Kien Ho, BETA's traffic engineer for the project.

"The advantage with this plan is it allows traffic to go westbound, and it eliminates several of the conflict points that exist now," Ho said.

Both the on- and off-ramp loops would be in the northeast quadrant of the intersection. Since the ramps would be wider than the current ones, they would require taking some land from the property next door - the 9/27 Shopping Center, McGrath said.

The land taken from the parking lot of the 9/27 plaza, according to the plans, would mean the loss of between 40 and 70 parking spaces, said Todd Finard, a partner with Finard Properties, which owns the shopping center. Finard's family has owned the plaza since the 1950s.

"We received a letter from Stop & Shop saying if this happens, they will leave," Finard said. "We barely have enough parking as it is on-site. If we have the anchor tenant leave, then the other tenants will leave."

Finard asked town officials and the engineers to look for a solution that would not require taking so much of the shopping center's land. Officials said they would try to work something out but were not specific about what that would entail or how it would affect the planning process and timeline.

The plan also looks to reduce the backup on Rte. 27 at the intersection. The plan calls for having two lanes each way over the bridge, and leading up to it, McGrath said. The on- and off-ramps would be controlled by traffic lights.

Another goal is making the area safer and easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to use, McGrath said. A four-foot shoulder would be included to use as a bicycle lane, and sidewalks would be built.

Glen Glater, chairman of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee, said he likes the bike lanes, but he hopes they will be marked so cars know they are for bicycles. Also, he suggested having signaled crosswalks for pedestrians at all places where the sidewalk crosses lanes of traffic.

A. Richard Miller, a former member and chairman of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee, said he would like to see the bike lanes wider than four feet, which he called a minimum. Ideally, he said, they would be six feet wide.

Miller said he would also like to see a rotary-type intersection so traffic lights are not required.

A couple of plans using rotaries were considered, but they would have required taking even more private property, said Patrick Reffett, Natick's community development director.

The designs presented last night reached what is known as the 25 percent design stage, Reffett said. The state Department of Transportation will take over designs when the 25 percent plans are finalized.

The earliest work could begin is 2012, Reffett said, but it will likely be later. The project will last at least two years, McGrath said, once construction starts.

The cost estimate is $20 million, which will be paid for using state and federal money, Reffett said.

(Charlie Breitrose can be reached at 508-626-3964 or cbreitro@cnc.com.)